



# Reading Excellence Act Analytic Agenda FY 1999

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of Education

Reading Excellence Program, Office of Elementary  
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Planning and Evaluation Service, Office of the Under  
Secretary

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# Reading Excellence Act

## Analytic Agenda

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### Introduction

The Reading Excellence Act is an innovative and different approach to changing children's reading achievement in high-poverty or low-performing schools. Through competitive grants to states, which in turn hold competitions among specific types of districts for subgrants, this program is aimed at effecting change in teacher practice in grade K-3 classrooms in participating schools.

Both state grantees and district subgrantees must carry out a variety of specific activities. Districts and schools must provide:

- Professional development activities designed to improve the reading instruction practice of teachers and other instructional staff.
- Early literacy intervention to children experiencing reading difficulties, including tutoring and other extended learning opportunities and kindergarten transition programs.
- Family literacy services (e.g., parent and child interactive activities, early childhood education, adult literacy training, and parent education).

Reading instruction must cover the six dimensions of reading in the Act's definition of reading:

*The term 'reading' means a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:*

- A. The skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print.*
- B. The ability to decode unfamiliar words.*
- C. The ability to read fluently.*
- D. Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension.*
- E. The development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print.*
- F. The development and maintenance of a motivation to read.*

Section 2252 (4), Reading Excellence Act.

A central premise of the REA is that scientifically based research findings in recent years have indicated ways to prevent reading failure, but these findings have not yet been widely adopted by states, districts, schools, and teachers. Research has clearly demonstrated that particular instructional practices can be effective in ensuring children's early reading success. What is less clear, however, is how to effect broad change in reading instruction at the classroom level. The reasons for lack of implementation are diverse, and range from philosophical differences about the proposed instructional practices to lack of knowledge on the part of teachers on how to implement them to lack of materials, especially books, and support services.

The REA, unlike most recent federal legislation, has taken a directive approach, mandating specific program components and content based on research. It also uses competition and peer review to encourage thoughtful development of implementation strategies.

Evaluations and analytic studies are under way or planned that will provide information for policy and program management decisions and to help states, districts, program designers, and evaluators as they implement reading reform in these very disadvantaged schools. Much of the information will also be of great use to any one interested in improving reading instruction in early grades.

The Department also will need to collect program performance information for Government Performance Review Act (GPRA) reporting. The evaluations, in particular, will be a source of this information, along with state performance reports and national assessments. The REA performance plan for FY 2001 (in Appendix 1 on page 15) describes performance indicators for this program.

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## Overview of the Analytic Agenda for Reading Excellence

**Research questions.** Key analysis questions for Reading Excellence center around three areas:

1. How well the program is being implemented by states, districts, and schools?
2. What student outcomes is it achieving?
3. What are effective or promising practices for reading instruction and supports such as family literacy?

**Collaboration.** To provide information on all these, the Department's Reading Excellence Program (REA) in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Planning and Evaluation Service (PES) in the Office of the Under Secretary are collaborating on an agenda of analytic studies and projects and large-scale program evaluations. In addition to other offices within the Department (for example, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs), other key partners include the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the National Academy of Sciences (NAS).

**Funding.** Resources for this work primarily come from a 1.5 percent set-aside in the Reading Excellence Act for national evaluation. For FY 1999 and FY 2000, this amounted to \$3.9 million each year.

**Topics.** Current topics covered range from analytic projects on professional development, English language learners, and a Condition of Reading to standard program evaluations and a special study of children's reading growth to assess the basic REA model.

**Methodology.** Projects include literature reviews; case studies of promising practices; development of papers that mix research review with professional judgment in areas where research is not definitive; and major evaluations that will, as a group, survey state, district, and school staff; test student achievement; and conduct classroom observations and testing of teacher knowledge about effective reading instruction.

In addition, several methodology projects have been funded to inform national and state evaluations and REA is funding a project of technical support to REA state evaluators.

**Expert advice.** Finally, REA will start an expert advisory committee to advise on the analytic projects as well as the evaluations.

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## Current Contractors Providing REA Analytic Support

American Institutes for Research (AIR) – Rita Kirschstein

Mathematica Policy Research (MPR) – David Myers

RMC Research Corporation – Christine Dwyer

University of Texas – Alba Ortiz

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## Analytic Projects

**Target audience:** The target audiences for these projects are: ED staff; other federal agencies working on reading issues (especially the National Institute for Literacy and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Services); state REA directors and staff; REA district and school administrators; program developers; and program evaluators at all levels. In some cases researchers may find a paper useful in identifying areas that need work.

In most cases, only teachers and parents with considerable background will find these papers and reports useful. However, the National Institute for Literacy has the mission of disseminating Reading Excellence information broadly and will adapt these for teachers and parents where appropriate.

### **Current projects:**

1. **Professional development (AIR)** Through review of published documents, site visits and observation, a series of in-depth case studies will describe promising approaches to professional development in reading. In each case study, AIR will analyze the content of the curriculum with respect to REA and state standards, categorize the structure of the delivery of professional development, trace the implementation of the approach from developer to intended recipient, compare implementation across sites, describe follow-up, and document the strength, reliability and validity of available evaluative data. AIR will conduct 5 or 6 such case studies and develop a report that summarizes the development, implementation, delivery, and impact of professional development in reading. AIR is also doing an extensive review of the literature on professional development in reading and is preparing an annotated bibliography.
2. **Literature synthesis on instruction for English language learners (Alba Ortiz, University of Texas).** This paper, almost completed, will provide a overall synthesis of the research literature on what is known about instruction for English language learners. Although the focus of the paper is children's reading, the paper also speaks to addressing the cultural needs of the children and the community and parental roles in literacy acquisition. In addressing reading instruction, the paper covers a number of issues: the relationship of oral language skills and literacy development; high quality instruction for English language learners receiving reading instruction in their native language and English; and teacher competencies important to student's acquisition of literacy skills.
3. **Promising practice for English language learners (AIR).** The REA office and AIR, in collaboration with NICHD, NIFL, and OBEMLA, will examine, in detail, what is currently known about instruction for English language learners in the six dimensions of reading defined by the Reading Excellence Act (phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, background knowledge and vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation). For each dimension, at least two papers (probably by different experts) are proposed: one for reading instruction that is primarily in the child's native language and a second for reading instruction that is primarily in English. In some cases, a third

paper may be needed to address issues of transfer to English from the native language or to focus specifically on Spanish, the language with the largest number of English language learners. Following preparation of initial versions of the papers, a symposium will be held to discuss the papers, give feedback, and identify future areas for work. The final report will include both the revised papers and synthesis of discussion and recommendations from the symposium.

The target audiences for the final report are policy makers and administrators, program designers, and evaluators. The National Institute for Literacy may work with the report to identify ways to make it accessible for principals and teachers.

4. **Condition of Reading (AIR).** AIR will develop a publication that synthesizes the most current data and research on reading. This publication will present results from national studies that test reading, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress, provide summary statistics and information on funded REA states (enrollments, reading initiatives in the state, focus of REA grant), and present summaries of key reading reports (such as that of the National Reading Panel). In addition, the Condition of Reading will include short papers on topics critical to the teaching of reading in grades K-3. Possible topics are professional development in reading, assessment in the early grades, teaching reading to English language learners, and evaluating reading initiatives.

**Future likely areas:** Future topics that are high on our priority list when more resources and staff are available include

- *Family literacy.* What is promising practice in early childhood education? What research is needed to provide definitive information on effective approaches for parenting education?
- *Early intervention.* What is the most effective way to provide early intervention (usually one-on-one tutoring or small group tutoring) for kindergartners and first graders who aren't succeeding in spite of appropriate reading instruction?
- *Special education.* How does special education change in a classroom with effective reading instruction? (In theory, fewer children will be referred to special education because they will get better services in regular instruction – both better in-class instruction and the opportunity for early intervention help. Any remaining children will be very disadvantaged and difficult to remediate.)

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## Methodology Projects

1. **Evaluation design and analysis for assessing children's reading growth (Mathematica Policy Research).** There are some key technical issues in designing experimental design studies that assess a developmental process like reading. Structural modeling, especially growth curve analysis, is a technique increasingly used by reading researchers and others to assess development. It requires multiple data points -- probably four in a school year -- for reading, since children basically learn to read (or don't) in about 18 months. Mathematica will describe appropriate uses of growth curve analysis and other advanced statistical techniques in reading evaluations.

Use of experimental design, the premier evaluation strategy used in many NICHD studies, continues to be controversial in early elementary education, but is likely to be the appropriate strategy for confirming the Reading Excellence logic model. Time series designs may also have much to offer -- especially for support areas such as professional development. The contractor will lay out alternative designs that could be used, discuss strengths and weaknesses, and highlight issues and technical concerns that our evaluations studies will need to address. Again, while the focus will be on Reading Excellence programmatic concerns, the paper will be of use in other Planning and Evaluation Service evaluations.

This project will involve consultation with national experts in structural modeling, including convening a meeting for discussion and review, as well as a few site visits to increase the contractor's familiarity with Reading Excellence strategies and elements. The design work will be used to inform studies in the FY 1999 REA evaluation plan, especially Effects of REA Framework on Children's Reading Growth.

2. **Framework and protocols for school and classroom implementation measures (RMC Research Corporation).** In order to assess children's reading gains, information is needed on the characteristics of the schools and classrooms which are implementing new reading approaches. The contractor will identify elements of practice associated with schools and classrooms that are implementing research-based reading approaches, including resources available, use of assessments, approach to providing tutoring support, organizational strategies, professional development and support, etc.; develop frameworks for description and analysis of approaches/measures for technical and general reports; consult with researchers who have developed implementation measures, including convening a meeting for discussion and review; develop profiles and recommendations for use of different measures and types of measures; and prepare a report.

The report from this project will be used by PES' REA program evaluation (School Impact and Implementation Study); the causal evaluation study planned (Children's Reading Growth); and other Planning and Evaluation studies of early reading (especially Title I and CSRD).

3. **Assessment of student achievement (AIR).** AIR will develop a publication to inform Department of Education staff and guide REA evaluators in the selection of standardized assessments to measure children's reading skills. The publication will include descriptions of different kinds of assessments (e.g., diagnostic, norm-referenced, and criterion-referenced), psychometric properties (reliability and validity), and types of scores (e.g., raw, stanine, percentile). In addition, it will include a description of the criteria to consider when selecting assessments, such as the administration mode (group or individual) and the ease of administration and scoring. In order to further assist REA evaluations, AIR also will create a database of K-3 reading assessments that includes information on the domains measured by the instruments, as well as costs, time to administer, reliability and validity, and scoring procedures.

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## Support for State Evaluations

SEAs receiving REA grants must conduct evaluations that, at a minimum, measure the extent to which students who are the intended beneficiaries of the subgrants made by the agency have improved their reading skills. SEAs must contract out the evaluation, and may reserve up to 2 percent of the total grant amount for the evaluation. In addition, the SEAs must submit annual performance reports that include information on the programs of reading instruction selected by subgrantees, the results of use of the SEA evaluation, and a description of the subgrantees that are receiving funds. If SEAs reserve the full 2 percent for evaluation, they will expend approximately \$4.8 million of FY 1999 funding for evaluation.

AIR is providing support to REA state evaluation efforts in a variety of ways that include (1) chairing a listserv for state evaluators that not only seeks issues from evaluators but also stimulates discussion on core topics such as assessments used, the development of interim measures, and techniques used for evaluating a typically mobile population; (2) consulting with selected individual states on evaluation issues; (3) developing evaluation guidelines to states; and (4) possibly developing an evaluation handbook that provides suggestions and examples for evaluating REA projects at the state level. In addition, AIR will plan an evaluation institute that will bring all state evaluators together for a two-day workshop on evaluating reading initiatives.

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## Program Evaluations

Overall objectives for the REA evaluations are:

1. Assess effectiveness of the REA in improving early reading in high-poverty, low-performing schools for all students, including children at risk of inappropriate referral to special education.
2. Assess the quality of REA's implementation in states, districts, and schools.
3. Determine effectiveness of the REA's overall strategy of supporting change in primary school instructional practice based on research findings through providing competitive grants to states.
4. Provide data for ED's GPRA requirements.

The three REA studies described below work together to achieve all of these objectives. Collectively, the three studies will answer questions about what REA schools look like, how programs are implemented and structured, and what outcomes they produce and for which students.

- The first study – State, District, and School Performance – will evaluate state performance and will provide general descriptive information on all REA districts and schools.
- The second study – School and Classroom Impact and Implementation – will answer questions about implementation and external validity. Specifically, can the REA model be successfully implemented on a large-scale basis and does it produce better outcomes in these schools than typical reading instruction in Title I schools?
- The third study – Effects Of REA Framework/Model on Children's Reading Growth – will focus on questions of internal validity. Specifically, is the model itself effective and for which students is it effective? How does it change children's reading growth compared to typical Title I instruction?

Specifically, the proposed REA evaluations include:

1. **State, District, and School Performance.** This study will evaluate states' and districts' implementation of the REA and will collect basic performance data on school implementation through universe surveys. The study will collect data on all states, districts, and schools. In year one, this would be 17 states, about 400 districts, and 1,200 schools. It will provide descriptive data on implementation, identify problems for early intervention and assistance, and provide a sampling frame for other evaluations. The school survey will be a questionnaire for principals or the school REA contact.

*Main research questions: How well is the REA being implemented by states and districts? Who are participants? What activities are being funded? What problems are being encountered?*

2. **School and Classroom Impact and Implementation.** The primary purposes of this study are to evaluate the quality of school and classroom-level implementation of REA and evaluate student performance in REA schools compared to students in Title I schools. The study will determine whether the schools participating in REA are improving the quality of reading instruction. The study will have two major components. First, the study will conduct a representative sample of REA schools (sample estimated at 400 schools) to provide detailed descriptive information and to review implementation and, where available, outcomes. The second component, in a sample of fully implemented sites (estimated at 75 schools), will assess student outcomes in grades K-3 (cross-sectionally) and provide in-depth information on implementation.

*Main research questions: Do REA schools improve their reading achievement over time? Do REA schools show greater gains in reading than similar Title I schools? Do REA programs meet the criteria defined in the legislation at the district and school-level? To what extent are all program components being implemented fully?*



- 3. Effects Of REA Framework/Model on Children's Reading Growth.** This study will assess student outcomes through a longitudinal evaluation of a cohort of kindergartners in well-implemented REA schools, comparing their progress through third grade to similar children in Title I high poverty schools. The study will collect data in approximately 20 treatment and 20 control or comparison sites. Evaluation design will include growth curve analysis of multiple data points and classroom observations.

*Main research questions: What is the effect of implementing the REA "model" or underlying framework? (K-3 content consists of six dimensions of reading based on scientifically based reading research plus the key implementing components of professional development, family literacy, and early intervention) Which students benefit most? Least? What works best and when for the worst-off students – the children who, while not learning disabled, still have great difficulty in learning to read?*

**Relation of study samples:** The first study, with its basic school universe data on an estimated 1,200 schools will provide a sampling frame for the other studies. The second study will draw its representative sample of REA schools (400 schools) from the universe sample data. The second component of that study (75 schools) will be drawn from the universe data base as well, identifying a sample of schools with at least fully implemented programs for outcomes assessment and detailed implementation information. The third study – Children's Reading Gains study – will draw its sample of 20 treatment schools from the sample of 75 schools, with one exception. If an opportunity arises that facilitates random assignment of schools (perhaps through collaboration with a state or large district, that opportunity will be considered in addition to sampling information on current schools). Contractors for the studies will be required to collaborate with each other and ED to minimize burden.

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## REA Advisory Group

This activity will provide support to all REA studies and may offer assistance to Title I ESEA and Title II HEA studies that focus on reading. Instead of funding individual advisory groups for each study, the Department will identify a set of experts to provide advice on the content and methodology of all REA evaluations. Experts would cover topics such as the following:

- Reading instruction, professional development, English language learners, and family literacy.
- Student and teacher measures, implementation assessment, and evaluation strategy including experimental design.

The group will not be expected to provide consensus reports – members will review and comment on research questions, analysis plans, study findings, deliverables, etc. as individuals.

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## Appendix A: Descriptions of Proposed Evaluation Studies

Descriptions below of proposed studies for FY 1999 funding include background for the evaluation, key issues, evaluation questions, and likely methodology.

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### 1. State, District, and School Performance

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This project will provide descriptive information on state and district implementation of the Reading Excellence Act and basic information on school activities. It will collect information on all states, districts, and schools participating in REA. Wherever feasible, the study will use extant data, including NCES' Common Core of Data and NAEP, as well as state education factbooks. The first cohort of state grants will have 17 states, about 400 districts, and about 1,200 schools.

*Part of this project has already started – the state and district survey. An OMB forms clearance package is ready to go pending completion of the school survey. The local school survey was proposed earlier as a brief descriptive study but is expanded in this plan to collect additional information both for fast feedback on the program and for use in sampling.*

Implementation questions will include the following:

- What are states doing to provide technical assistance to eligible districts? What was the content of training/consultant help?
- How well do states' subgrant processes go?
- Which districts and schools receive awards to participate? What are the characteristics of the schools? How many teachers and children will participate?
- What forms of technical assistance do states and districts provide to schools? How well do the states and districts transmit the basics of scientifically based reading research and what is known about effective practice?
- What activities are local schools carrying out? How is the local project staffed? What professional development is being provided? Duration? Time span? Content? Is the school buying materials for teachers?
- What performance indicators are states using to track progress? What kinds of data will be collected for their independent evaluation?
- What problems are states, districts, and schools encountering as they implement their REA grant/subgrant?
- What progress is being made by states in changing teacher certification?
- What are important barriers to implementation encountered?

More specifically:

- For state implementation, the project will collect data through interviews with state staff and use of extant data from NCES and state databooks to provide information on state activities such as state staffing; membership and activities of the State Reading and Literacy Partnership; state standards and assessments related to reading in early grades; relation to other initiatives; documentation of state technical assistance activities for eligible districts and, after subgrant awards, to participating districts and schools; eligible districts and schools compared to participants; difficulties in implementation; products such as guidance and subgrant competition materials; evaluation; and lessons learned.

- For districts, the project will collect information through interviews with district staff and use of extant data from NCES and state databooks on district staffing, current curriculum materials for reading instruction or assessment; other related programs; technical assistance activities to schools; prior reading philosophy and policies; current reading philosophy and policies; criteria for selection of participating schools; problems encountered; key activities funded; professional development activities organized by the district; current products developed by the project; monitoring and supervisory activities; progress reported; and lessons learned.
- For schools, the project will collect data through a relatively short Internet-based survey questionnaire for the lead person for REA in the school (principal or REA contact). Topics will include: basic descriptive data on students; teachers, principals, the project coordinator and other REA staff, and other school staff; the plan for REA funds; whether outside program models are being used; curriculum materials currently used and what is bought with REA; information on professional development and other key REA processes being implemented, such as the number of hours of professional development, providers, and topics being covered; tests/assessments currently used, by grade level; tests/assessments added for REA; programs offered to parents; content and approach to early intervention (such as tutoring, summer programs, or kindergarten transition); coordination with Title I, bilingual education, and other programs; Title I School Improvement status and what activities have been undertaken/resources received outside of REA; benefits seen from REA to date; and barriers to implementation. To minimize burden, emphasis is being placed on short answers responding to a list, with very few open-ended questions. Extant data from NCES and state databooks will also be used to provide context.

All data collection activities will require OMB forms clearance. The task order for this project started in October 1999.

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## 2. School and Classroom Impact and Implementation

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The Reading Excellence School and Classroom Impact and Implementation Study will examine implementation of the Reading Excellence Program in classrooms, schools, and district. Classrooms, schools and districts must implement a comprehensive set of activities under REA that are intended to improve reading instruction in grades K-3. These include changes to reading instruction in grades K-3 primarily through professional development, supplemental tutoring for children who are having reading difficulties in spite of changed instruction, family literacy activities ranging from preschool activities for children to parenting education and adult literacy training, and kindergarten transition services. Schools and teachers must implement a comprehensive reading program that covers the six dimensions of reading in grades K-3, assess how well their students are doing, and take appropriate corrective action for children that are not moving quickly to reading proficiency.

This study will examine the extent to which these activities are being implemented, whether instruction is changing to conform with research on effective practices, and how students perform in schools that have implemented these programs.

The study will have two major components. First, the study will conduct a representative sample of REA schools (sample estimated at 400 schools) to provide detailed descriptive information and to review implementation and, where available, outcomes. The second component, in a sample of fully implemented sites (estimated at 75 schools), will assess student outcomes in grades K-3 (cross-sectionally) and provide in-depth information on implementation.

This study will collect information such as the following:

- **Background and baselines.** The study will collect information on students, teachers, and schools, including background information on teachers, principals, and students (including teacher knowledge of scientifically based reading research at program start), current instructional practices and professional development activities, student and teacher turnover, and current rates of referral to special education. Particular emphasis will be placed on obtaining information on English language learners and the services they receive. The study may include a special substudy of sites serving many children in that category.
- **Implementation.** This study will assess how well the REA program is being implemented in schools and classrooms, using quality of implementation indicators such as changes in teacher practice, teacher and principal knowledge, principal/administration support, provision of professional development in line with best practices from research, changes in materials, appropriate use of assessments in the curriculum and as indicators of classroom and school performance, types of tutoring offered, and other activities.
- **Outcomes.** Collection of data on student reading levels and gains will use two approaches. First, the study will collect and use existing state and local assessment data. However, few states require testing of kindergarten or first grade students, yet knowledge of outcomes at those grades is important for determining whether the REA program is being implemented effectively. Second, this study will collect student outcome data using common assessment measures on a smaller number of sites where the REA program was well-implemented.

In addition to student achievement data, the study will collect information on other desired outcomes such as reduction in referrals to special education and extent of children's engagement in school. Children who fail in reading often develop associated emotional/social problems – and quickly, within a year or two. It is likely that success in reading will be associated with greater school engagement as well as greater overall productivity.

The study may contain an assessment of the feasibility of using some type of equating (despite the report from the NAS on the national test)—e.g., through Lexile scores—to compare student reading achievement across sites.<sup>1</sup>

Evaluation questions for this study include:

- Do REA schools improve their reading achievement over time? Do REA schools show greater gains in reading than similar Title I schools? Do REA schools that serve large numbers of children who are English language learners show similar gains?
- Do REA programs meet the criteria defined in the legislation at the district and school-level? To what extent are all program components being implemented fully-- are models composed of aligned professional development, tutoring, and family literacy components? Are districts providing adequate technical assistance and support?
- In programs that are not well-implemented, what are the most significant barriers to implementation?

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<sup>1</sup> The Lexile Framework is a tool that makes it possible to place readers and text on the same scale. The difference between a reader's Lexile measure and a text's Lexile measure is used to forecast the comprehension the reader will have with the text. The Lexile Framework systematizes two common intuitions: (1) that text can be ordered as to comprehensibility, and (2) that readers can be ordered as to reading ability. The framework was developed by A. Jackson Stenner and Malbert Smith III under a grant from NICHD.

- What are the program's effects on classroom instruction and teacher practice? What percentage of schools change reading instruction to align with research on effective practices?
- How well are instructional strategies being implemented in schools and classrooms? How do schools choose reading materials and curricula? Are schools purchasing commercial materials and/or models?
- What is the extent of teacher and principal knowledge of research-based reading instruction and how does it change over time?
- What is the content and process for professional development offered in REA sites—typical and ranges? Have schools changed the way they deliver professional development?

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### 3. Effects of REA Framework/"Model" on Children's Reading Growth

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This study will evaluate the effects of comprehensive reading strategies covering the six dimensions of reading and based on scientifically based reading research in selected schools. The purpose is to assess the effect of a well-implemented REA "program" on children and classrooms in grades K-3 and determine how the basic underlying framework or "model" for the Reading Excellence Act can best be implemented in schools.

While there is definitive research on *what* needs to be taught in reading, *how* best to do so has not been as well documented. In addition, few research studies have "put it all together" – most have focused on one or two aspects of reading rather than comprehensive reading reform for grades K-3.

The evaluation will answer questions such as the following:

1. Does the reading achievement of children in schools using the REA framework or "model" improve? For which students is the REA intervention most effective?
2. Are special education referrals reduced? Retention in grade?
3. Are performance improvements similar for students across different ranges of initial performance?
4. Are particular instructional and support strategies differentially effective depending on initial reading level?
5. What are appropriate benchmarks of achievement for children with different learning patterns? For English language learners?
6. Can effective or highly promising practices be identified in the REA sites in reading dimensions that currently lack convergent research on effective teaching practice, such as vocabulary or comprehension strategy?
7. What are appropriate benchmarks for professional development that changes reading instruction and results in improved reading gains?
8. How critical is small group instruction in initial reading instruction?
9. How important is tutoring to school and classroom achievement? Small group instruction outside the classroom?
10. What is the value added by REA to regular school activities and outcomes?
11. Do students in the REA schools achieve higher reading performance than students in typical Title I School Improvement schools? In comparable (poverty rate, etc.) "regular" Title I Schoolwides (not necessarily in School Improvement status)? How does reading instruction differ among these?
12. Do achievement gains warrant the expenditure of additional funds through REA grants or can current Title I funds be reconfigured to produce similar reading gains?
13. If current Title I funds were reconfigured what, if any, additional funds will be necessary to enable ninety-five percent of students in Title I School Improvement schools to learn to read?

The study will involve intensive, longitudinal evaluation with multiple measures of individual student performance, experimental design or very high quality quasi-experiments such as interrupted time series, and analysis of individual student reading growth. The number of treatment sites is estimated at 20 schools; control or comparison sites, also 20 schools. The sample will be selected from the 75 schools fully implemented sites selected for the School and Classroom Impact and Implementation study (SCII) described above. The 20 Children's Reading Growth treatment sites will be as well-implemented as possible as can be identified by the end of next year, based on sampling data from the State, District, and School Performance study and site visits.

The SCII study will provide additional context information in the 20 treatment sites, such as once a year student testing in the grades not tested by this study and broader implementation information in those other grades and for the school. Common measures, both student achievement and classroom implementation, will be used by both studies, although the Children's Reading Gains study will collect additional outcome and implementation data on children and teachers.

Study in a typical site will involve studying well-implemented REA-funded schools as they carry out their program; following children (including control groups) from kindergarten through grade 3; employing multiple measures of reading; achievement that cover the six dimensions of reading; and collecting extensive information on teachers, instructional programs, out-of-school activities, special kindergarten transition services, special education identification and referral, and family support for learning.

## Appendix B: REA Performance Indicators Plan, FY 2001

<b>Reading Excellence Program (FY 2000) - 10/4/00</b>			
<b>Goal: To improve reading for children in high poverty schools and in schools needing improvement by supporting research-based reading instruction and tutoring.</b>			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline Data</b>	<b>Sources, Periodicity, Next Update</b>
<b>1. Significantly improve students' achievement in participating schools and classrooms</b>	<b>1.1 Participating students' achievement.</b> By 2002, participating students will increase their reading scores significantly compared to comparable non-participants.	<i>New program</i>	1.1 School Impact and Implementation Study annually, 2001.
<b>2. Build the capacity of states and local districts to design and implement improvement strategies for reading that result in effective changes in the classrooms.</b>	<b>2.1 Teacher knowledge.</b> An increasing number of teachers participating in program-sponsored training will develop expertise in research-based reading instruction methods. <b>2.2 Instructional change.</b> An increasing number of teachers participating in program sponsored training will significantly align their instruction with research based, effective practice. <b>2.3 Tutors.</b> An increasing number of well-trained tutors will use research-based practices to help children learn to read. <b>2.4 Family Reading.</b> An increasing number of parents participating in program-sponsored activities will provide enriched home reading opportunities to their children <b>2.5 State system changes.</b> By summer 2001, at least 16 states will have revised their state in-service training and guidelines for reading certification to reflect scientifically based reading research.	<i>New program.</i>	2.1 School Impact and Implementation Study, annually, 2001; State, District, and School Performance Study, annually, 2001. 2.2 School Impact and Implementation Study, annually, 2001; State, District, and School Performance Study, annually, 2001 2.3 School Impact and Implementation Study, annually, 2001; State, District, and School Performance Study, annually, 2001; program reports from Corporation for National Service, annually, 2001; Federal Work-Study program data on tutoring, annually, 2000. 2.4 School Impact and Implementation Study, annually, 2001. 2.5 State, District, and School Performance Study, annually, 2001.
<b>3. Identify and validate research-based models of effective practice for reading instruction, reading tutoring, and professional development.</b>	<b>3.1 Model identification.</b> By 2002, at least 5 new, research-based reading programs or teacher training programs will be validated as effective and suitable as models for other districts and states.	<i>New program.</i>	3.1 Children's Reading Growth study, annual, 2002; National Even Start Evaluation, 2000.

## Reading Excellence Program (FY 2000) - 10/4/00

**Goal:** To improve reading for children in high poverty schools and in schools needing improvement by supporting research-based reading instruction and tutoring.

Objectives	Indicators	Baseline Data	Sources, Periodicity, Next Update
<p><b>Key Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Create a partnership with state grantees to implement an outstanding program that makes a significant impact on children's reading in participating schools and provides insight and models for other states, districts, and schools. Provide differentiated technical assistance and training for states and subgrantee districts and schools. This technical assistance would be as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Foster partnerships between reading researchers and highly effective local schools to gain even more understanding of effective reading practices.</li> <li>➢ Link advanced projects with ones that are okay but need to improve further.</li> <li>➢ Support content training by experts for projects, that are good but not "great."</li> <li>➢ Finally, assemble teams of ED staff, state staff, and specialized contractors for projects in trouble (often a management rather than content problem).</li> </ul> Activities will include holding workshops, symposiums, and training programs on content and program management issues; supporting research-project partnerships; maintaining a high quality web site; and providing specialized technical assistance based on the needs of individual schools, districts, and states. </li> <li>❖ Provide technical assistance to states that were not successful in obtaining an REA grant to help them address substantive issues identified by the expert review panel and to organize their plan for reading improvement.</li> <li>❖ Develop guidance for states and local programs on appropriate evaluation and student assessment methods and on effective approaches for professional development in reading.</li> <li>❖ Develop content guidance on effective practices in reading, tutoring, family literacy, and professional development, based on valid and reliable scientific research—using the best from exemplary Reading Excellence projects as well as from continually updated findings from research.</li> <li>❖ Use the evaluation and dissemination funding to develop additional information on effective reading instruction and professional development (using scientifically-based evaluation research methods), in collaboration with NICHD and other offices in the Department of Education, including the Planning and Evaluation Service, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and Office of Special Education Programs.</li> <li>❖ Collaborate with the National Institute for Literacy as it identifies and disseminates information on scientifically-based research on reading and on effective programs, including those identified by state or federal evaluations.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Relation of Objectives to Strategic Plan:</b> The Reading Excellence program directly supports Objective 2.2 (every child reading by the end of 3rd grade) in its support of professional development and services for high quality, research-based reading programs and supportive tutoring services. The program also supports Objective 2.4 (special populations) because it focuses its resources on districts with high poverty rates or numbers and districts with schools identified as needing school improvement. Models resulting from this program will be helpful to similar districts elsewhere. The program supports Objective 2.1 (all children entering school ready to learn) through its family literacy activities. Finally, this program will identify effective models for teacher training in reading that can be used in support of Objective 1.4 (teacher preparation).</p>			



## Appendix C: Reading Excellence Analyses and Evaluations - Summary Table

Project	Overall Topic or Research Questions	Methodology	Start Date	Status	Contractor	Length	Lead Office	Type of Stud
<b>Analysis and development</b>								
<b>1. Professional development</b>	What are promising practices for professional development on reading instruction?	Case studies, literature review, extrapolation from standard professional development literature.	Dec. 1999	Under way	AIR	10 months	OESE-REA	Descriptive, developmental
<b>2. Literature synthesis on English language learner instruction</b>	What is known about instruction for English language learners (ELLs)?	Research synthesis	Sept. 1999	Under way	UT – Ortiz	10 months	OESE-REA	Descriptive, developmental
<b>3. Reading instruction for English language learners</b>	How are ELLs best taught reading – whether in the native language or in English? By the six dimensions of reading.	Research synthesis, extrapolation from scientifically based reading research, expert judgment	May 2000	Under way	AIR	12 months	OESE-REA	Descriptive, developmental
<b>4. Condition of Reading</b>	What is known about reading instruction in the U.S.? About children, teachers, schools, states?	Compilation of statistics	July 2000	Funded	AIR	6 months	OESE-REA	Descriptive
<b>5. Evaluation design and analysis for assessing children's reading growth</b>	How can growth curve analysis be used in evaluations of children's reading growth? Experimental design?	Design	July 2000	Funded	Mathematica	6 months	OESE-REA	Design
<b>6. School and classroom implementation measures</b>	What are appropriate measures to identify effective reading instruction?	Design	July 2000	Funded	RMC	8 months	OESE-REA	Design
<b>7. Student achievement</b>	What are appropriate measures of student achievement for evaluations?	Design	Oct. 1999	Under way	AIR	12 months	OESE-REA	Design
<b>Evaluations</b>								
<b>8. State, district and school performance</b>	How is the REA being implemented by states, districts, and schools? Who is being served? What are key barriers and problems?	Descriptive surveys, including use of Internet- based reporting) and telephone interviews. Universe. First year: estimated 1,200 schools.	October 1999	Under way	AIR	Ongoing	OESE-REA	Descriptive
<b>9. School and classroom impact and implementation</b>	Do REA schools improve their reading achievement over time? Do REA schools show greater gains in reading than similar Title I schools? Do REA programs meet the criteria defined in the legislation at the district and school-level? To what extent are all program components being implemented fully?	Representative survey of 400 schools. Subsample of about 75 fully-implemented schools for outcome assessment and detailed information on implementation. Use of state and local assessment data where available.	Sept. 2000	In process	RFP	5 years	OUS-PES	Descriptive, correl systematic compar impact

<b>Project</b>	<b>Overall Topic or Research Questions</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Lead Office</b>	<b>Type of Study</b>
<b>10. Effects of REA framework on children's reading growth</b>	What is the effect of implementing scientifically based reading research on disadvantaged students? On the worst-off students who typically have flat growth curves?	Experimental design or high quality reference group; longitudinal study using common measures at multiple points of time, growth curve analysis.	Sept. 2000	In process	RFP	5 years	OESE-REA	Causal, impact
<b>Technical support</b>								
<b>11. State evaluation assistance</b>		Technical support to SEAs as they implement state evaluations.	October 1999	Under way	AIR	Ongoing	OESE-REA	Technical support
<b>12. REA evaluation advisory group</b>		Experts in reading instruction, reading research and assessment, and evaluation methodology	Sept. 2000	Planned		Ongoing	OESE-REA	Advice, quality control